

Calumny and Defamation displayed

OR, A BRIEF

ESSAY

On a NEW

Theological QUESTION,

VIZ.

Whether Charity be a damning Heresy?

In a LETTER to

The Reverend Mr. DUGARD
of Fareham in Hampshire.

By ANTHONY BLISS, D. D. Vicar of
Portsmouth.

*Be not righteous overmuch:—Why shouldst thou
destroy thyself? Eccles. vii. 16.*

*Michael the Archangel, when contending with the
Devil, he disputed about the Body of Moses, durst
not bring against him a railing Accusation, Jude v. 9.*

*If any Man among you seem to be religious, and
bridleth not his Tongue——this Man's Religion is
vain, James i. 26.*

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L O N D O N:

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A

LETTER, &c.

REVEREND Sir,

THOUGH I had often heard of the Bitterness of your Zeal, and the excessive Warmth of your Temper ; yet I never had an Opportunity of seeing any thing of it, till our Meeting at the Funeral of our late Brother, Mr. *White*, at *Titchfield* ; when it broke out upon me in an Over-load of Censures and Reproaches, for advancing a Notion which I cannot, even now, esteem at all faulty ; and which, though faulty, cannot bring me under so odious an Imputation as you have taken no small Pains to load me with.

You may remember that in giving you an Account of the Controversy between Dr. *Berriman* and Mr. *Chandler*, I mentioned the Distinction which the learned Doctor has made between *necessary* Articles of Faith, and such as are *indispensably necessary*. This Distinction (as over-hasty Spirits are apt to do) you presently decryed and ridiculed, without considering the * Reason of the thing, or upon what Foundation it stands. In one

* See this Distinction vindicated by Mr. Johnson in his Letter to Mr. Chandler. Compare also Aquin. ii. 2. Q. 2. A. 5. C. Bellar. Lib. 3. de Eccl. cap. 14. Laud's Conference, p. 18, 28, 165, 212. Edit. 3. Chillingworth, Chap. 3. Sect. 12. 13. Taylor's Polemical Discourses, Part ii. Book 1. Sect. 4. Waterland's Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 8, 9, 87, 8.

Sense indeed the Distinction is without a Difference, *i. e.* whatever is to any Person necessary to this or that purpose, must be deemed indispensably necessary to *that* Person with respect to the *same* purpose. But I told you that when we speak of things indispensably necessary, we mean such as upon the Terms of the Gospel are absolutely and universally necessary to Salvation in the next Life, and to the Character of a Christian in this; and that beside these, several other Things are necessary to the Salvation of *particular* Persons, and still more must be deemed necessary to ALL with respect to *particular* Ends and Purposes, inferior or subordinate to that of Salvation. This, however, did not prove so satisfactory, as I hop'd it would to a Gentleman of your *Acumen*; but you went on to treat the Distinction with Ridicule and great Contempt. Give me leave now to make the Matter plain by a familiar Instance; which, though of a practical Nature, will well enough serve our purpose; inasmuch as the same Objections, which lie against the Distinction with respect to the *Credenda*, are altogether as strong with respect to the *Agenda* of our Religion. Suppose one of 17 or 18 Years of Age to be cut off suddenly by the Hand of God, without having ever received the Lord's Supper: Suppose him farther to have been of sober Conversation, earnestly desires to live in all the Ordinances of the Lord blameless; and that this Omission arose purely from an over-high Veneration for this Ordinance, and a mistaken Opinion of his own Unworthiness to partake of it: what think you of such an one's everlasting Condition? will you say that he fail'd in a Duty indispensably necessary to *his* Salvation; and in consequence thereof consign him inevitably to Hell flames? * God forbid.

* See Kettlewell's Help to Communicating. Part. ii. Ch. i.
And

And yet, you will acknowledge, as our Church teaches in her Catechism, that this as well as the other Sacrament is *generally* necessary to Salvation. Had I made choice of this Instance for the Illustration of the Point, perhaps it might have prevented all that Obloquy which has been thrown upon me: But, unfortunately ! I instanced in the Divinity of our Lord, alledging that, though *that* be a necessary Article of Faith, yet I could not deem it indispensably necessary, so as that no one can be saved, who did not believe it.

This exceedingly provoked your righteous Spirit, and instead of pulling off the Scales from my Eyes with a gentle Hand, or shewing me my Error in a Scholar-like, Christian Way, you presently abused me in a most outrageous Manner, telling me, that I was guilty of an heretical Notion ;—that I was in a bad way ;—that as soon as I got home, 'twould be my best way to fall down on my Knees and beg God's Pardon for what I had said ;—that in the Primitive Times I should have had my Tongue bor'd through with an hot Iron for such an Assertion ; and that I was not fit to have God-speed said to me.

I told you I was not chargeable with Heresy in St. *Paul's* Sense of the Word, where he makes it Part of the Character of an Heretick that he be self-condemned. You denied the Apostle to have said any such thing ; which is very surprizing ; inasmuch as the meaning of that Text has been mightily canvassed by the learned World ; and you cannot, I believe, have read any one tolerable Author professedly treating upon the Subject of Heresy, who has not bestowed a particular Consideration upon that Passage. I did not pretend to be Textuary good enough to name the Chapter and Verse ; nor did I undertake to cite the Words *verbatim*, as they stand in our *English* Translation :
yet

yet insisted that there is a Passage to this Purpose; *A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition, reject; knowing that such an one is self-condemned.* You remembred nothing of the Matter, and, to convince me effectually, shrew'dly offered to lay me any Wager that there is no such Text. This kind of Argument I am always ready to acknowledge myself not rich enough to answer: But if you please to turn to *Tit. iii. 10, 11.* you will find those famous Words,—*A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition, reject: Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

One would have thought that the Drift of the Distinction I made, or my acknowledging the Divinity of Christ to be a necessary Article of Faith, though not indispensably necessary, might effectually have secured me from your heavy Reproaches; and our Reverend Neighbour, Dr. *M—n*, expressed his Wonder more than once, that you should go on to charge me with *Arianism*, notwithstanding I professed, at the Beginning of our Debate, as firm a Belief of our Lord's Divinity, as you or any other else can have. Surprized at the Strangeness of the Illation, that ——— Because I think one, who does not believe our Lord's Divinity, may possibly be sincere enough to be forgiven; therefore I myself must disbelieve that Doctrine, (which is so palpable a piece of *Quixotism* in Theology, that I never can think of it, but the Knight of *La Mancha*, his mistaking a Wind-mill for a Gyant, occurs to my Thoughts; and which a moderate Acquaintance with Books, or even a cool Head, without any Erudition at all, might easily have prevented :) I could not forbear saying to you, “ Read; and you will find
 “ that others have said the same that I do; and
 “ those too some of the greatest Ornaments of our
 “ Church

“ Church ;” and I particularly nam’d Dr. *Waterland*. This was enough to have brought a modest Man to cool and right Temper ; but, (as some venomous Creatures extract Poyson out of the choicest Plants) you only took occasion from thence to charge me afresh with the Guilt of Heresy, concluding with a poinant Assertion that you “ have forgot more than ever I read.” I would by no means, Sir, distrust your Varacity either as to the Extensiveness of your reading in Days of *Yore*, or your Forgetfulness of it now ; and ’tis one of the principal Designs of this Letter, to do you the friendly Office of refreshing your Memory with a few Quotations out of some celebrated Writers, which you must have read and taken notice of formerly in the Authors themselves, though some way or other it has unfortunately happened that there are now no Traces of them left in your Brain.

I well hop’d that you would have remonstrated against me from the Press, as you threatned you would : But it seems you are no ways troubled with “ an Itch of Scribbling,” and chose rather *fortiter calumniari*, as not only easier in itself, but also what you have a better Talent for. Accordingly you have taken a great deal of ill-natured Pains, under the Cloak of Zeal and a deep Concern for Religion, to spread it all over the Country that I am an *Heretick*, an *Arian*, one that does not believe the Divinity of our Lord ; and, to crown all, you charged me in direct Terms, before the Clergy at the Arch-Deacon’s Visitation, with not being a Christian.

What Reception the Story has met with among deluded Bigots, (who may perhaps pin their Faith upon your Sleeve, and implicity embrace, as so many Gospel-truths, all the Crudities you can advance ;) I know not : But I can assure you, it was
here

here entertained as the Effect either of great Ignorance, or else of Party-spleen and Resentment. There is not a single Person in all this populous Parish, that I know of, that ever entertained the least Degree of Suspicion of my leaning to the Heresy of *Arius* : And to convince you effectually that I do not, (unless with a seared callous Conscience you are determined to persist in your false Accusation, and to charge me with *Arianism* not only without Evidence, but contrary to all the Evidence that can be had in the Case :) Give me leave to lay before you the following Particulars.

First, Upon a competent Examination into the Controversy concerning our Lord's Divinity, and after a serious Perusal of a great Variety of learned Treatises on both sides of the Question, I do fully and heartily believe him to be very God of very God ; yet not another God distinct from the Father, but united in one Substance with the Father, in Glory equal, in Majesty co-eternal. This is what I uniformly inculcate from the Pulpit ; what I have often maintained in publick Conferences and Disputes with professed *Arians* ; and what I have also insisted on in Print.

Secondly, 'Tis well known that in many publick Companies I have expressed a Wonder how the Gentleman in the *Arian* or *Socinian* Scheme can accept of Preferment in the Church of *England*, and make the Subscriptions and Declarations which she requires of all her Ministers. And not only this ; but I have also from the Press remonstrated against such Subscriptions and Declarations maintaining that these Gentlemen do not enter fairly by the Door into the Church and Church-preferments ; and that they run directly counter to the Intention of the Law at the same time as they pretend Obedience

dience to it. And I must needs now say, 'tis amazing to me, how those, who enjoy the Gospel-light, and profess to believe in Jesus Christ, can allow themselves in such collusive Tricks and Methods of Prevarication, as the wiser and better Sort of Heathens were * asham'd of, and thought abominable.

Thirdly, Tho' I see no Reason to think, that the Belief of our Lord's Divinity is indispensably necessary to the Salvation of every individual Christian ; yet 'tis certainly necessary to perfect our Faith, and compleat the Character of a true Believer : And not only So ; but an *Arian* (however sincere in this particular Hypothesis, and all his other Notions and Practices, and upon that account a capable Object of Mercy thro' Christ :) cannot be entitled to the same degree of divine Favour in the next World, as in case his Faith, concerning our Lord's Divinity, were according to truth, he might and would be.

* Deinde nullam rem neque legibus, neque Scriptura ulla, denique nec in sermone quidem quotidiano, atque imperiis domesticis recte posse administrari, si unusquisque velit verba spectare, & non ad voluntatem ejus, qui verba habuerit, accedere. Cicero de Invent. Lib. II.

An non, cum voluntas, & consilium, & sententia interdicti intelligatur, impudentiam summam, aut stultitiam singularem putabimus, in verborum errore versari ? Orat. pro A. Cæcina.

Quæ lex, quod senatus consultum, quod magistratus edictum --- non infirmari, aut convelli potest, si ad verba rem deflectere velimus ; consilium autem eorum, qui scripserunt, & rationem, & auctoritatem relinquamus ? Ibid.

Quæ res igitur valuit ? Voluntas : Quia non potest ; verba reperta sunt, non quæ impedirent, sed quæ indicarent voluntatem. Ibid.

Nondum hæc, quæ nunc tenet sæculum, negligentia Deum venerat : nec interpretando sibi quisque jusjurandum & leges aptas faciebat, sed suos potius mores ad ea accommodabat. Liv. Lib. III.

Lastly, I not only conceive the Herefy of the *Arians*, (tho' they should never proceed farther in Infidelity) to be very dangerous in it's own Nature, and where 'tis adher'd to thro' Obstinacy, gross Carelessness, or such Prejudices as may with reasonable Ease be surmounted, certainly damning ; but I consider it also as an Inlet to Deism, or a total Apostacy from the Faith of the Gospel ; Experience shewing that those who began with disbelieving Christ to be truly divine, have settled at last in a thorow-pac'd Infidelity, and disbeliev'd Him to be a Prophet sent by God.

After these Professions, which I make *ex animo*, and with the utmost Sincerity, I hope you will have Candor enough to believe me to be not only a Christian, but also far remov'd from the Herefy you have so often and so bitterly charg'd me with. Let us now consider what Foundation you had for that Charge.

In the Letter you sent me, you correct my State of the Case, and tell me, that the Position, which I laid down, is precisely as follows,— “ That
 “ according to the Terms of the Gospel, it is not
 “ absolutely necessary to the Salvation of a Person
 “ professing himself a Christian, and having proper
 “ Light and sufficient Means of Conviction;
 “ to believe the Divinity of our Lord and
 “ Saviour.”

I may just take Notice that the Words—“ having proper Light and sufficient Means of Conviction,”—were not originally mine, nor indeed, to the best of my Remembrance us'd at all during our Debate. The utmost I can recollect of the Matter is, that you ask'd, Whether I spake “ of People enjoying the Light of the Gospel, and professing Christianity ?” To which I reply'd, Yes. “ I don't speak of Heathens, but
 “ of

“ of Persons who live in a Christian Country, and
 “ so may have Opportunities of knowing the
 “ Truth.” But let this pass.

Before I proceed to a Vindication of this Proposition, 'twill be proper to explain and settle the Meaning of the Terms.

First then ; By the believing the Divinity of our Lord, I mean an explicit Belief of his true and real Divinity, (for this is necessary, tho' not indispensably so :) i. e. of his Consubstantiality, Coeternity, and Coequality with the Father.

*Secondly, By a Man's “ having proper Light “ and sufficient Means of Conviction.” I mean his living in a Christian Country, having common Sense and the free use of the Scriptures, which are * able to make us wise unto Salvation, and are † profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness ; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good Works.*

Thirdly, Concerning the Terms of the Gospel, I must observe, that they are full of Mercy, making favourable Allowances for all Ignorances and Errors, which tho' perhaps not absolutely, and in the physical Sense invincible ; yet morally speaking are so ; i. e. which are consistent with Sincerity, an honest love of Truth, and a reasonable Measure of Care and Attention to find it out. All Errors and Ignorances of this kind may be deem'd invincible and involuntary, inasmuch as they are so in moral Account : And in this Sense I shall frequently use those Terms in the following Sheets.

* 2 Tim. iii. 15. † Ibid. v. 16, 17. See also Cocceius, S. Scripturæ Potentia, Pars II. c. 9.

Lastly,

Lastly, By Salvation, I mean a Deliverance from the Sentence of the Law of Works, or the Condemnation, which, by the rigorous Tenour of that Law, all Mankind, as Transgressors, are subject to.

The Terms of the Proposition being thus explain'd, I must next observe, that the Persons, who may be said not to believe our Lord's Divinity, as above-mention'd, fall under three Classes.

The *First* Class are in a State of mere Ignorance, having never enter'd upon a particular Consideration of the Question, whether Christ be truly and properly God.

The *Next* are in a State of Doubt and Suspense.

The *Last* utterly disbelieve this great and important Article of our Christian Faith.

These are the Persons, the Possibility of whose Salvation is in Dispute between us: And, unless you can shew that every individual profess'd Christian, reducible to either of these three Classes, is in a damnable State, and, notwithstanding all the Mercy of the Gospel, must infallibly perish; the severe and heavy Censures which you have pass'd, not only upon the Proposition *materially* considered, but also upon me for maintaining it, are absolutely unbecoming a Christian, a Scholar, and a Divine. To be more particular, I will consider each Class distinctly by itself. And,

First, I beg leave to ask what your Judgment, in cool Blood, and upon mature Consideration, is of those, who, thro' an humble Opinion of their own intellectual Powers, and an over-high Veneration for the Mysteries of Religion, content themselves with believing in a confuse, general, indeterminate,

minate way, that Christ is God, without ever descending farther into the Particulars and Minute-nesses of this Doctrine; and who, therefore, in Strictness, cannot be said either to believe or disbelieve his true and proper Divinity? This, no doubt, has been the Case of Millions of People in low Life,—Plowmen, Dairy-maids, poor Mechanicks, and such like. They liv'd and dy'd without an actual and explicit Belief, that three Persons are but one Substance, or that the Father has no natural Authority over the Son, and did not exist so much as one single Moment before He begat Him. What, think you, will be the Doom of those ignorant People at the last Day? Would you consign them to the bottomless Pit merely for lack of an * explicit Belief in so deep a Mystery? Or, do the Scriptures plainly declare that Christ will, regardless of their Righteousness in other respects, their deep Contrition for all known Sins, their † general Repentance for all Sins of Ignorance, and their Faith in Him as their only Saviour? One of the Homilies of our Church says, ‡ “ He that is so weak that

* Dubitandum non est, quin immensa Numinis clementia multos cœlo beet, qui etiam præcipuorum Articulorum non nisi confusam admodum cognitionem habent, Witius, Exercit. ii. in Symbol. Apost. Sect. iii.

† Cum dicimus, Articulos Fundamentales illos esse, sine quorum cognitione & fide salus obtineri nequit, non id ita intelligendam est; quasi neminem eorum qui aliquem ex illis Articulis ignorant, aut circa illum errant, ad salutem perventurum existimemus. Adest quippe, ut in vitiis atque peccatis, ita & in ignorantia atque erroribus, duplex remedium; alterum a parte nostra, nimirum pœnitentia seu generalis; seu particularis; alterum a parte Dei, puta ejus Misericordia; Quorum ope, ut peccatis gravissimis, ita & gravissimis erroribus, veniæ locum dare posse, a nemine negari potest. Vid. Alph. Turret. de Articulis Fundament. p. 5.

‡ Hom. I. Pars ii.

“ He

“ He is not able to brook strong Meat, yet He
 “ may suck the sweet and tender Milk, and de-
 “ fer the rest until He wax stronger, and come
 “ to more Knowledge. For God receiveth the
 “ learned and unlearned, and casteth away none ;
 “ but is indifferent unto all. And the Scripture
 “ is full, as well of low Vallies, plain Ways,
 “ and easy for every Man to use, and to walk
 “ in: As also of high Hills and Mountains,
 “ which few Men can climb unto.” Again,
 “ Those Things in the Scripture which be plain
 “ to understand, and necessary to Salvation, eve-
 “ ry Man’s Duty is to learn them, to print them
 “ in Memory, and effectually to exercise them :
 “ And as for the dark Mysteries, to be content-
 “ ed to be ignorant in them, until such time it
 “ shall please God to open those Things unto
 “ Him.” To this let me subjoin the Words of
 Mr. *Kettlewell*, a famous and excellent Divine of
 our Church ; * “ If we are desirous to know
 “ God’s Laws, and read good Books, frequent Ser-
 “ mons, hearken to any good Instructions which
 “ we meet with, and that according to our Op-
 “ portunities, and in such Measure as any good
 “ Man would interpret to be an honest Endea-
 “ vour after the Knowledge of our Duty, if it
 “ were to himself. — If after all this, I say, in
 “ some Points we are still Ignorant, our Igno-
 “ rance is involuntary, and shall not harm us ;
 “ it is not chosen by us, and therefore it will ne-
 “ ver condemn us. — [It] begins then only to
 “ be our wilful Sin, and an Article of our Con-
 “ demnation, when our Lusts or Vices introduce
 “ it, and we have a Mind to it, and take no
 “ Pains against it, or, what is the Consumma-

* Measures of Obedience, L. IV. c. vii.

“ tion and Height of all, industriously to labour
 “ and endeavour after it.

Secondly, The next Class is made up of Doubt-ers.

Let *Simmius* stand for an Instance of this Kind, whom we will suppose to have been not only a good moral Man, but also a sound Believer in all other respects. He thought several Texts of Scripture to be very strong in favour of the *Catholic Doctrine*; but knew not how to reconcile some others to it. As to the Fathers, He found not only profess'd Impugners of our Lord's Divinity, such as *Zwicker*, *Sandius*, *Whiston*, claiming the most ancient of them as favouring their Hypothesis, but even some on the *Trinitarian* side, particularly *Petau* the *Jesuit*, giving Countenance to the Claim of the *Arians*: And this serv'd as a Balance to the Writings of *Le Moyne*, Bishop *Bull*, *Le Nourry*, &c. Who profess'dly undertook to vindicate the Orthodoxy of the *Ante-Nicenes*. Under this Uncertainty, He resolv'd to go to the Fountain-head, and see with his own Eyes what the Ancients taught; rightly judging, that by the current Doctrine of the Church, in its earliest Ages, we may best collect the true Sense and Meaning of Scripture in reference to this and most other controverted Articles of Faith. With this View He apply'd himself with great Diligence and Impartiality to reading the Fathers; but was cut off by a sudden Illness soon after He enter'd upon the Work.

Now, Sir, according to your Doctrine, this poor Man must, by the Rules of the Gospel, infallibly be damn'd. For if, as you contend, Faith in our Lord's Divinity be indispensably necessary to the Salvation of every Christian, then it follows, by undeniable Consequence, that none of
 the

the Mercy, which God has promis'd thro' Christ, can possibly extend to poor *Simmias*. Neither his Piety, his Charity, his Temperance, his sincere Love of Truth; no, nor yet his Faith in Christ as his only Saviour, will, it seems, avail any thing to his Justification. The unhappy Doubt, which He was under, about this one Article of Faith, spoils all; and, like a Mill-stone about his Neck, will inevitably sink him in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone at the Day of Judgment, unless uncovenanted Mercy intervene to save him. But pray, from what Corner of the Bible is it, that you have so learnt Christ? Shew me plain Scripture for your Opinion. 'Tis easy for Gentlemen of ungovern'd Zeal and fiery Spirits, to sit in Judgment upon, and *Anathematize* whom they please; but it concerns them to take Care never to curse those whom God has not cursed. If you'll prove, by Scripture, that *Simmias's* Name is not written in the Book of Life, or produce one or more Texts, which stand in bar to his Admission into Heaven, I will immediately give up the Point. In the mean time I shall go on to believe, that *Simmias's* want of Faith, in this one Article, will, thro' Christ, be dispens'd with and pardon'd; notwithstanding you may think fit to hereticate this Notion, and represent me as in the broad Path to Hell for maintaining it.

The *Last* Class is made up of such as utterly disbelieve, or deny our Lord's Divinity: And here again I must call for Scripture-evidence. What Text is there that condemns the Men of this Tribe with so much Rigour and Strictness, as not to admit of any Reserve or tacit Exception for particular Circumstances; or that says, no Allowance shall be made for the Strength of their Prejudices, and the Involuntariness of their Errors?

Permit

Permit me to say 'tis agreed between us, that this is an important Point: Much, very much indeed depends upon it. But then, before we insist on the Importance of any Doctrine, there is a previous Question to be determin'd, *viz.* whether it be true or no? And till this Matter be settled, an *Anti-trinitarian* will in his Turn tell us, that the natural Supremacy of the Father is an important Point: Nay, if he chance to be of your anathematizing Temper, 'tis well if he don't condemn the Catholicks to a Man for dishonouring the Father by honouring the Son, even as they honour the Father, and confidently proclaim that not so much as one of them is a Christian, or a Jot better than a Polytheist and Idolator.

Farther, we are agreed that 'tis a Doctrine of the Foundation, nearly affecting the Vitals of our Religion, It has indeed so close a Connexion with the Christian Life, involves with so many of the prime Parts of the Gospel-Theology, and is so interwoven with the very Frame and Texture of it, that for my Part I cannot disbelieve this Article without rejecting the whole Bible. Nevertheless it must be own'd that what is fundamental and absolutely necessary to one, (all things consider'd :) may (all things consider'd:) not be so to another; * “ Which Variety of Circumstances, says Mr. *Chillingworth* to his Popish Adversary, makes it impossible to set down an exact Catalogue of Fundamentals, and proves your Request as reasonable, as if you should desire us (according to the Fable) to make a Coat to fit the Moon in all her Changes; or to give you a Garment that will fit all Statures; or to make you a Dial to serve all Meridians. ” To the same Purpose are the follow-

* Chill. Chap. III. Sect. xiii.

ing Words of Archbishop *Laud*: * “ *Bellarmin*
 “ is forc’d to grant this — *there are many Things,*
 “ *de Fide, which are not absolutely Necessary to*
 “ *Salvation.* Therefore there is a Latitude in the
 “ Faith, especially in Reference to different Mens
 “ Salvation. To set Bounds to this, and strictly
 “ to define it for particular Men, *just thus far*
 “ you must believe in every Particular, or incur
 “ Damnation, is no Work of my Pen.” And
 again; † “ Tho’ the *Foundation* be one and the
 “ same in all, yet a Latitude there is, and a large
 “ one too, when you come to consider not the
 “ Foundation common to all, but Things neces-
 “ sary to many particular Mens Salvation: For
 “ to whomsoever God hath given more, of him
 “ shall more be required, as well in Belief, as in
 “ Obedience and Performance. And the Gifts
 “ of God, both ordinary and extraordinary, to
 “ particular Men, are so various, as, that for
 “ my Part, I hold it impossible for the ablest
 “ Pen that is to express it. And in this respect I
 “ said it with Humility and Reason, that to set
 “ these Bounds was no Work for my Pen; nor
 “ will I ever take upon me to express that Tenet
 “ or Opinion (the denial of the Foundation only
 “ excepted) which may shut any Christian out of
 “ Heaven. And *A. C.* I believe you know ve-
 “ ry well to what a narrow Scantling some
 “ learned of your own Side bring the very Foun-
 “ dation itself, rather than they will lose any that
 “ lay hold on Christ, the Son of God, and Re-
 “ deemer of the World. And as Christ epitom-
 “ izes the whole Law of Obedience into these
 “ to great Commandments, the Love of God
 “ and our Neighbour; So the Apostle epitomi-

* *Laud's Conference*, p. 212. † *Ibid.* p. 236.

“ zes the whole Law of Belief into these two
 “ great Assents, *that God is, and that he is a Re-*
 “ *warder of them that seek Him, Heb. 11. that*
 “ *seek Him in Christ.*”

You well know, *Arianism* was once the prevailing Doctrine, and every where * almost triumph'd over Orthodoxy. The Prejudices of Education in those Times must have been very strong: And can you believe that out of all the numberless poor Souls, who from their Childhood had been accusom'd to conceive of the Son as naturally subordinate to, and begotten by an arbitrary Act of the Father, not so much as one Individual escap'd the Damnation of Hell?

I know of no Protestant that has presum'd to damn the Papists in a Lump, notwithstanding all the gross Corruption of Doctrine they are chargeable with. The judicious *Hooker* has an excellent Sermon, to shew, First, the † Possibility; and then the Probability there is, that God might be merciful to save Thousands of our Fathers, tho' they liv'd in Popish Superstitions, inasmuch as they sin'd ignorantly. Give me leave to transcribe a Passage or two: † “ Many are partakers
 “ of the Error, which are not of the Heresy of
 “ the Church of *Rome.*” — †† Put a difference, saith St. *Jude*; *have compassion on some.* “ Shall
 “ we lay up all in one Condition? Shall we cast
 “ them all Head-long? shall we plunge them
 “ all into that infernal and everlasting flaming
 “ Lake? — Them who have taught [Heresy,]
 “ with them whose Simplicity has, by Sights and
 “ Conveyances of false Teachers, been seduc'd to

* See Hooker's Eccles. Polity, L. 5. Sect. 42. Laud's Conference, p. 197. Berriman's Historical Account, &c. p. 221.
 † Page 41. † Page 42. †† Page 43.

“ believe

“ believe it ? — * They are not all Faithless,
 “ that are weak in assenting to the Truth, or
 “ stiff in maintaining Things any way opposite
 “ to the truth of Christian Doctrine. But as ma-
 “ ny as hold the Foundation which is precious,
 “ tho’ they hold it but weakly, and as it were
 “ with a slender Thread ; tho’ they frame many
 “ base and unsuitable Things upon it, Things
 “ that cannot abide the tryal of the Fire, yet shall
 “ they pass the fiery Tryal and be sav’d ” —
 “ † Forasmuch therefore as it may be said of the
 “ Church of *Rome*, — she doth not directly de-
 “ ny the Foundation of Christianity ; I may, I
 “ trust, without Offence, persuade my self, that
 “ Thousands of our Fathers in former times,
 “ living and dying within her Walls, have found
 “ Mercy at the Hands of God. ”

I might transcribe from this excellent Author
 several other Passages to the same purpose; but I for-
 bear. Throughout the whole Sermon he breathes
 a most excellent Spirit, quite different from what
 you are of. And so does Archbishop *Laud*, Mr.
Chillingworth, Bishop *Stillingfleet*, and several
 more of our best Divines, in treating on the same
 Subject. I say, they were of a quite different
 Spirit from you. For doubtless, the whole ag-
 gregate Mass of Corruption in the Church of
Rome will appear heavier, when weigh’d in the
 Balance of the Sanctuary, than the single Heresy
 of *Arius*: And if we may not doubt but that
 Millions of *Papists* are gone to Heaven, what
 Reason can we have to trust the whole Sect of
Arians, not so much as a single Person excepted,
 into outer Darkness, or to † “ make such deadly
 “ Epitaphs, and set them upon their Graves:

* Page 43. † Page 45. † See Hooker’s Sermons, p. 64.
 “ *They*

“ *They deny’d the Foundation of Faith directly, they are damn’d, there is no Salvation for them?* ” In short, I am content to rest the Matter upon this single Argument ; which I desire you seriously to consider, and, if you can, to expose the weakness of it at leisure.

If the Gospel has not absolutely precluded every individual Christian denying our Lord’s true and proper Divinity from the Possibility of Salvation thro’ Faith in his Blood : Then, according to the Terms of the Gospel, the Belief of this Article is not indispensably necessary to Salvation.

But the Gospel has not done this.

Therefore, &c.

The *Major* is undeniable : The *Minor* I prove thus :

If the Gospel has neither taught, that no sincere well-meaning Christian, examining with a reasonable measure of Attention the Evidence for our Lord’s Divinity, can possibly disbelieve it ; — nor absolutely consign’d to Hell-flames all that disbelieve this Point, affording no hopes of Mercy to particular Persons, tho’ ever so sincere, or of Allowances to be made for the Involuntariness of their Errors : Then the Gospel has not absolutely precluded every individual Christian denying our Lord’s true and proper Divinity from the possibility of Salvation thro’ Faith in his Blood.

But the Gospel has not done either one or the other of these two Things.

Therefore, &c.

Here again the *Major* is past doubt: And what Exception can be made to the *Minor* ’tis no easy matter to divine. For, in the *first* Place, you will not, I presume, insist, that an *Arian*, tho’ sincere in his Opinion, and upright in all other respects, is, upon the single Score of that Opinion, cut out from all the Promises of the Gospel,
and

and absolutely doom'd to Misery. To maintain this, is to derogate vastly from the Excellence of the Gospel, and the Mercies of God in Christ Jesus. And, in the *next* place, I know of no Text, from whence it can be concluded, that no Christian whatever, reading his Bible with an honest Heart, and using a reasonable measure of Attention to find out the Truth, can possibly disbelieve the Co-eternity, and Co-equality of *Christ* with the Father. In the times afore-mention'd, when *Arianism* prevail'd every where almost, and Thousands were bred up in that Opinion, without ever hearing it argued against *ex professo*, or by any Pastor of the Church call'd in Question, I doubt not but that several, especially among the weaker of both Sexes, were sincere enough to be admitted, this one Error notwithstanding, to touch the Hem of *Christ's* Garment. Whenever you can produce a single Text, to which this Opinion either is, or implies a Contradiction, I will presently recant it: But till then, you may go on to rave and rail, and throw out your *Brutum Fulmen* against me as plentifully as you please; I shall still incline to the charitable Opinion I am at present of, and rest fully satisfy'd too, that 'tis no mistaken Charity.

But perhaps you will remind me of my Subscription to the *Athanasian* Creed; which says, that *whosoever will be sav'd must hold the Catholick Faith of a Trinity in Unity, and that such as do not keep it whole and undefiled, shall without doubt perish everlastingly*. This was objected to me at the *Visitation*. My Reply is, If you construe the Words of this Creed in the strict Sense, as supposing an explicit Belief of all the minute Branches of the Doctrine of the Trinity, (which are there with great *metaphysical* Skill and Subtlety set forth,) to be not only necessary in the general,
but

but indispensably necessary to the Salvation of every particular Christian ; you will do well to consider, whether you did not subscribe without duly thinking upon the Matter ; and whether, as oft as you read this Creed by the direction of the Rubrick, you don't solemnly denounce Damnation against Thousands of well-meaning People under the three Classes of Unbelievers before mention'd, without any Warrant from Scripture for so doing. This methinks is a very awakening Point, your own Salvation having a close Connexion with it. For tho' rash and groundless *Anathema's* no ways affect the everlasting Condition of those whom they are levelled against, yet they * recoil with great Force upon him that throws them ; and God will, one Day, severely demand of all concern'd, why they thought Damnation to be so slight a matter, as to denounce it against whom they pleas'd, and without any Warrant from Him.

For my part I never did, nor will I subscribe those damnatory Sentences in the strict Sense, or without making the Distinction (however you may please to ridicule it :) between indispensable Articles of Faith, and such as are necessary only in the general : And 'tis no small Satisfaction to me to find that our best Divines have generally subscribed in the Sense that I did. † “ The meaning is not, says Bishop *Stillington*, that every
“ one is damned who doth not conceive aright
“ of the difference of Nature and Person in the
“ Trinity, or of the Essential and Personal Attributes ; but that those—who wilfully re-

* Sæpe id sibi dari negotii censet, Theologus, ut damnet de Fide dissentientes, quem iniqui oris judicii, & spretæ caritatis, et talenti pessime collocati, Christus ipse damnabit. Spanhem. de Fundamentalibus. Disp. 10. Sect. 8. † *Stillington's Works*, Vol. 6. p. 633.

“ reject this Article of the Christian Faith, when
 “ it is duly propos’d to them, are guilty of a
 “ damning Sin.— If when this Doctrine of the
 “ *Trinity* is propos’d to Mens Minds, they will
 “ not consider it, nor weigh the Arguments on
 “ both sides impartially, but with Scorn and
 “ Contempt reject it, and endeavour to bring Re-
 “ proach upon Christianity for the sake of it,
 “ and disturb the Peace of the Church about it ;
 “ such cannot be said to receive or *believe it faith-*
 “ *fully*, and by such Sins they do run the hazard of
 “ *perishing everlastingly*,” Dr. *Waterland’s* Com-
 mentary upon the first of these Sentences is as
 follows : * “ The meaning is, that every one is
 “ oblig’d, under pain of Damnation, to preserve,
 “ as far as in him lies, the true and right Faith.—
 “ As to the Allowances to be made for *invinci-*
 “ *ble* Ignorance, Prejudice, or any other unavoid-
 “ able Infirmities; as they will be pleadable in the
 “ Case of any other Sin, so may they, and will they
 “ also be pleadable in this : But it was foreign to
 “ the Purpose of the Creed to take Notice of it
 “ in this Case *particular*, when it is *common* to
 “ all Cases of like Nature.” And on the last
 Clause he comments thus : † “ This is to be
 “ understood, like all other such general Propo-
 “ sitions, with proper Reserves, and qualifying
 “ Constructions. As for Instance, if after lay-
 “ ing down a System of Christian Morality, it
 “ be said, *This is the Christian Practice, which,*
 “ *except a Man faithfully observe and follow, He*
 “ *cannot be sav’d* ; it would be no more than
 “ right and just thus to say. But no one could
 “ be suppos’d hereby to exclude any such merci-
 “ ful Abatements, or Allowances, as shall be

* Critical History, &c. Chap. 10. † Ibid.

“ made

“ made for Mens particular Circumstances,
 “ Weaknesses, Frailties, Ignorance, Inability, or
 “ the like, or for their *sincere* Intentions, and
 “ *honest* Desires of knowing and doing the
 “ whole Will of God; accompany’d with a ge-
 “ *neral* Repentance of their Sins, and a firm re-
 “ liance upon God’s Mercy, thro’ the sole Me-
 “ rits of Christ Jesus.”

It would swell those Papers beyond the Bulk intended, to transcribe what has been said on this occasion by Dr. *Hammond*, Dr. *Wallis*, Dr. *Jenkin*, Bishop *Hoadly*, the *anonymous* Author of *The Apology for the Church of England*, and several others; who all agree, that Allowances must be made in particular Cases for unconquerable Prejudices, and other pityable Infirmities. I shall shut up this Point in the Words of Bishop *Burnet*. * “ The common Answer in which the
 “ most eminent Men of this Church, as far as
 “ the Memory of all such as I have known,
 “ could go up, have agreed, is this, That these
 “ condemnatory Expressions are only to be un-
 “ derstood to relate to those, who having the
 “ Means of Instruction offer’d to them have re-
 “ jected them, and have stifled their own Convic-
 “ tions, holding the Truth in unrighteousness and
 “ chusing Darkness rather than Light.”

Hitherto, *Sir*, the Debate has been only about the truth of the Proposition before laid down. The principal thing is still behind. For, be it that the Proposition is faulty and indefensible; yet have you not † over-loaded me with Censures and Reproaches

* Exposition, &c. Art. 8. † Scandala, quæ quis falsa Doctrina præbet, non in minimis pono. At fingere scandala, ubi nulla sunt, vel levissimum in rebus ad fundamentum Fidei non spectantibus diffensum pro scandalo venditare, nefas puto.

Reproaches for maintaining it ? This is what I must charge upon your Conscience ; and 'tis upon this Account only that I give you the trouble of so publick an Address. * “ Alas ! What
 “ bloody Matter is there contain'd in this Sentence, that it should be an occasion of so many hard Censures ?—I see more Impiety in this
 “ Persuasion, tho' I had no reason for it.—
 “ As much is confessed by sundry others. — It is
 “ but only my evil hap, that the same Sentences
 “ which favour Verity in other Men's Books,
 “ should seem to bolster Heresy when they are
 “ once by me recited.” But let us come to Particulars :

First, You charg'd me with being an *Arian* Answ. † “ What Modesty, or Truth call you
 “ this ? For He that confesses a *possibility of Salvation*, doth not thereby confess no *peril of*
 “ *Damnation* in the same way ;” much less does He demonstrate, that He is in that way of thinking himself. When your Spirits were upon the fret, and Passion had got the ascendant over your Reason, 'tis wonder you did not call me an *Atheist* ; which you might have done with equal Truth, and upon as pregnant Evidence altogether. Did ever any Council, Synod, or private Writer fix the charge of *Arianism* upon one, who believ'd the real Divinity of our Lord, and insisted on its being a *necessary* Article of Faith ? Ransack the Histories of the Church, and produce, if you can, one Instance at least of this kind in past Ages ; otherwise I shall think my Case to be pe-

Immo, hi ipsi scandalum sæpius maximum præbent, suarum itidem actionum rationem coram Tribunali Servatoris reddituri. Buddeus, Præf. ad Differt. Theolog.

* See Hooker, p. 66. † See Laud's Conference, p. 196.
 cularly

cularly unhappy, and that you too deserve to be put upon Record as an *Original*.

But you'll say, I afterwards deny'd the indispensable Necessity of this Point. True : But what then? Does this prove me an *Arian*? Impossible ! Since I no way intended to be inconsistent with my self, or to unsay what I had before affirm'd. My insisting on the Necessity of believing Christ to be very God, was a direct, and a most palpable disavowal of *Arianism*. Ought not this to have been of some weight in my Favour? Does a Mistake in *Metaphysics* destroy a Man's Veracity? And am I not to be credited in what I affirm concerning a Matter of Fact, wherein I cannot be mistaken, (for surely I must know whether 'I believe Christ's Divinity or not :) merely because I make use of a Distinction, which, either as not having thought so well, or, it may be, as having thought better upon it, than your self, I cannot but esteem rational and well-grounded? Permit me to throw the process of your Reasoning into the Form of a Syllogism : In *Mood* and *Figure* 'twill stand trick'd up thus :—

Whosoever imagines that 'tis not indispensably necessary to disbelieve the natural Supremacy of God the Father, or that Allowances will be made for particular Circumstances ; so that some, who cannot disbelieve that Doctrine, as thinking they have plain Scripture-Evidence for it, in opposition to the Co-eternity and natural Co-equality of the Son, may be capable of being fav'd upon the Terms of the Gospel: That Man however he may pretend to believe the Divinity of Christ, and insist on its being a necessary Article of Faith, is most certainly an *Arian* in his Heart.

But *A. B.* imagines this.

Therefore *A. B.* (whatever he may pretend to the contrary) is an *Arian* in his Heart. *Q. E. D.*

A goodly Demonstration indeed ! And yet such wretched illogical Work you must expect to make of it, when ever you undertake to convict me of *Arianism*. Believe me, you may more easily square a Circle, or find out the Longitude, than hit upon a proper *Medium* for Proof of the *Major*. However, exert the utmost of your Skill, and, if you succeed, I promise faithfully that thenceforward,

Eris mihi magnus Apollo.

Suppose I should tell a Roman Priest, that the judicious Author of *The Ecclesiastical Polity* was of Opinion, that many of our Popish Ancestors dy'd in a salvable State, and that their Ignorances and Errors (tho' not absolutely invincible) were so far involuntary as to be dispensable with, and capable of Forgiveness upon Gospel-terms ; Would the Priest infer from hence that Mr. *Hooker* was an arrant Papist in his Heart ? No certainly ; or if he did, whatever other Order He might belong to, all the World would acquit Him from being a *Jesuit*. I need not stay to make the Application.

Secondly, Next you charg'd me with being guilty of an *Heretical Notion*, defining Hereticks to be " such as Err in Fundamentals, " * " Good God ! Whither will not a strong Byass carry " even a learned Judgment ! " Suppose my Notion in some remote Consequence to contradict the Scripture, is this ground enough for so se-

* See Laud's Conference, p. 215.

were a Reproach? You might say the Proposition is *materially* sinful; but, till you are sharp-sighted enough to discern the Secrets of my Heart, and to determine with Certainty whether my Error be wilful or not, you should not presume to represent me as GUILTY of Heresy, or charge me with the *formality* of so black a Crime.

Beside, Why must this be deem'd a * *fundamental* Error, and, with respect to the *matter* of it, *Heretical*? Wretched will the State of the Church be, if ever the Spirit should prevail of putting Mens Opinions upon Tenters, and stretching their Errors in *Metaphysics* to a Size portentous enough to incur an *Anathema*! Fundamentals are usually reckon'd of two Kinds. Some Things are fundamental only to outward Communion; others are fundamental even to Salvation.

First then, Will you merely, on account of this Opinion, condemn me, in cool Blood, as utterly unworthy of Christian Communion? If the Keys of the Church hung at your Girdle, would you deny me Entrance? It seems you would, and I should have abundant Reason too to think myself well off, if no other wholesome Severity ensued. But suppose I should be cross-grain'd enough to ask for a Scripture-warrant for such Conduct; — Alas! What immense trouble would it put you to, to search out the Text!

Secondly, In the other Sense of the Term, your Charge is still more hideous and unwarrantable.

* Si solius divinæ autoritatis hoc est, Articulos fidei condemnere, profectò summæ temeritatis res est, quemlibet, a nobis qui dissenserit, orco addicere, aut res dubias, atque obscuras, quæ & ad Fundamentum Fidei haud pertinent, tanquam tales, Christianis imponere, atque anathematibus in eosdem furere. Pfaffius. Dissert. de Fundamentalibus. Observ. 1.

If you meant that I err'd in a Point fundamental to Salvation; my Answer then is in the Words of St. Paul, you * *have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.* Where is a damning Spirit made the Characteristic of a Christian? What Text threatens Damnation to us, unless we believe that no Person that ever dy'd, under the Light of the Gospel, either quite ignorant of, or doubtful about, our Lord's Co-eternity with his Father, can possibly find Mercy, as a Christian, or be accepted of God? Nay, shew me the Passage, which makes it a damning Sin not to be so censorious, as to believe, that during all the time that the whole World in a manner was *Arian*, not so much as a single Soul, in that way of thinking, escap'd the damnation of Hell, or was sav'd thro' the Mercies of the Gospel?

When you were ordain'd Priest this Question was ask'd you, "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain *sufficiently* all Doctrine requir'd of necessity for eternal Salvation thro' Faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determin'd out of the said Scriptures to instruct the People committed to your Charge, and TO TEACH NOTHING (AS REQUIRED OF NECESSITY TO ETERNAL SALVATION) but that which you shall be persuaded may be *concluded and prov'd by Scripture?*" To which you made this solemn Answer; "I am so persuaded, and have so determin'd by God's Grace." Doubtless you still think yourself bound by this Declaration: Whence 'tis natural to conclude, that in turning over your Testament, you have met with some Passage or other which shews my Position to be Heresy, or a fundamental Error: And if so, have a little

* 1 Cor. xv. 34.

Charity for me for once, and direct me to the Chapter and Verse; or rather, send me the Book with the Place turn'd down; for I am pretty confident there is no such Passage in my Bible.

Thirdly, The next thing observable is, your reproaching me as not fit to have *God-speed* said to me. This indeed is a Mode of Speech borrow'd from St. *John*; but us'd on this Occasion with no more Pertinence or Propriety, than Scripture was quoted by the Devil when he tempted our Lord.

In the first Ages of Christianity, a Distinction was made * “ between such Hereticks as contumaciously resisted the Admonitions of the Church, and such as never had any Admonition given them. — Men might entertain very dangerous Errors; but till the Church had given them a first and second Admonition, according to the Apostle's Rule, they were not reputed *formal* Hereticks, nor treated as such, till they joyn'd Contumacy to their Error.” This was very commendable Conduct in the Ancients, right in the nature and reason of the Thing, tho' the Scripture had given no Direction about it. How earnestly do I wish that you had thought me worthy of the like Candor! If instead of loading me with Reproaches and hard Names, you had enter'd, like a Divine and a Scholar, upon the Merits of the Cause, it would necessarily have been brought to a short Issue. For, either I must have given up the Point as dissonant to Scripture; or else, you must have own'd it to be an innocent Opinion, as unable to produce Scripture against it.

* See Bingham's Antiquities, &c. Vol. II. p. 106. Folio Edit.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, You told me that in some Ages my “ Tongue would have been bor’d thro’ with an “ hot Iron for such an Assertion.” But *Sir*, What think you of the Ages you mean? Goodly ones, no doubt, they were : And don’t you wish for a return of such Times with as much impatience, as ever any Vulture hurry’d to a Carnage? Methinks, you insinuate too plainly what Spirit you are of, and what burning Work you long to be at. And yet let me tell you, that to thirst after the Blood of your mistaken Brethren, and to kill them to do God Service, is a * fundamental Error in Practice, downright Heresy in Morality, and the very Spirit of Antichrist. After all ; What Ages were they you meant and hinted at? ’Tis well known, the Followers of *Arius*, when they were uppermost, persecuted the *Catholics*; and the *Catholics* in their turns made, I am afraid, too many Reprisals upon the *Arians* : But I don’t think that either of them ever carry’d the matter to such an Extremity as to burn and destroy those of their own Party, merely for saying, that some few on the other side, One in a Thousand, or perhaps in a Million, might be sincere enough to find Mercy thro’ Christ.

Fifthly, You upbraided me with not being a Christian. This was an home Thrust indeed, and the more remarkable, not only as ’twas so very publick, (most of the Clergy at the Visitation being present :) but also as it happen’d several Weeks af-

* Denique animadvertendum, eum, qui immunis est errore fundamentalis theoretico, in errorem fundamentalem practicum cadere posse, si videlicet charitate destitutus damnet & occidat eos, quos Deus damnatos & occisos non vult. Heidegger. Differt. de Fundament. Salutis. Sect. 71.

ter our first Debate; during which Interval one might have expected, that you would have calm'd your Passion, and return'd to your wonted Sincerity. It was well observ'd by Mr. *Chillingworth*; * “ He that will Accuse any one Man—of any
 “ great and horrible Crime, should, in all Reason
 “ and Justice, take Care that the greatness of his
 “ Evidence do equal, if not exceed, the quality of
 “ the Crime.” But what demonstrative Evidence have you that I am no Christian? I am afraid you argue as did the Author of CHARITY MAINTAINED BY CATHOLICKS, † “ Whosoever errs
 “ against any one Point of Faith, loseth all divine
 “ Faith, even concerning those other Articles
 “ wherein He doth not err; ” Which, let me tell you, is far from true Reasoning; and, tho’ true, cannot fairly be apply’d to me, till ’tis prov’d that I err concerning the Faith, and teach the reverse of what Scripture teaches. The grand, unpardonable Crime I am charg’d with amounts only to this, — that I over-abound in Charity, which, if you can prove, I would only wish to convey a little to you out of my abundance; and then, ’tis to be hop’d, we might walk together in the House of God as Friends. At present you seem to invert the Characteristic of our Religion, and to make it a Mark of a Christian not to be actuated by Charity, (which is represented as hoping all things, and believing all things:) but by Fury, and Zeal without Knowledge. But pray consider a little; Where is it made a Duty to be over-censorious, to sit in Judgment upon Mens Consciences, and to condemn them as utterly insincere, without knowing fully their particular Cases, or having sufficient *Data* to proceed upon? *Flesh and*

* Chap. 6 Sect. 1. † Chap. 6. Sect. 34.

Blood may have reveal'd this to you ; but not *your Father which is in Heaven.*

Sixthly and *Lastly* ; I must take Notice of your telling me that I “ have been nibbling a good “ while, but now appear to have swallow'd the “ Bait.” This I take to be the Key to the whole matter. You suspected my Orthodoxy before, and were greatly prejudic'd against me ; and therefore upon hearing the Position I laid down, you presently took the Alarm, and like a timorous, ill judging Watchman, hastily cry'd out, AN ENEMY, AN ENEMY, when only a Friend and a Brother was come. But, in God's Name, What Evidence have you that I ever nibbled at, or inclin'd to *Arianism* ? If you have any Witnesses in Proof of what you have affirm'd for *Fact*, let them set forth the Time when, the Place where, and the Company before whom, I any ways intimated that Scripture is in favour of that Notion. If you have no such Witnesses to produce, you'll fall under an heavy *Dilemma*, and be hard put to it which Character to chuse, whether that of *διδόλος*, a false and malicious, or at least a rash Accuser of your Brother and Fellow-labourer ; or of one of those who throw Firebrands, Arrows, and Death ; and say, *Am I not in Sport* ?

The foregoing Pages, *Sir*, were extorted from me by the virulence of the Reproaches, which out of an over officious and blind Zeal, or something worse, you have far and near loaded me with. “ Heresy. says St. *Jerom*, is a Crime of so “ deep a Dye, that no Man should tamely suffer “ himself to be charg'd with it.” Ministers more especially are concern'd to do themselves Justice under Slanders of this kind, and not suffer any one to rob them of their good Name, That great Engine of doing good, without which, the Word
of

of the Lord in their Mouths loses too much of its Weight and proper Efficacy : And if you think I have treated you with too little Ceremony, in this Epistle, you need only consider the greatness of the Provocation you have given me, which, with all equitable Judges, will plead my Excuse ; it being a thing next to impossible to write without some mixture of Asperity, under a just Resentment of so false and groundless, I had almost said, malicious Accusation as you have publish'd against me. Whether you'll think fit to make me any Reply I know not ; but the Impartial World will expect either a publick Defence of your Charge against me, or else a publick Recantation of it. If the former be a thing feasible, (and whether it be or no, is a thing palpably plain at first sight :) you owe it to Truth, to the Church of Christ, and to your own Character, as a Divine and a Scholar, to make such a Defence : If it be not, then the Latter is in common Justice due to me ; whose Character suffers in the Esteem of many well-meaning, perhaps, but unthinking and deluded People by your Means ; and I shall expect it as a just Debt, that you contradict your own Stories, and take more Pains, if possible, to set me right in the Eyes of these People, than you have to set me wrong. Give me leave to conclude with a short piece of Advice :—Be strict and exact in forming your own Faith, avoiding every the * least Error, as tho' 'twould prove mortal to you.

But

* His omnibus Principiis,---Decimum adjungere libet--- Scilicet, " Cum agitur de nobis ipsis, tutius esse, vel a minimis " Erroribus, quasi Fundamentales essent, abhorreere, & in Ve- " ritatum Divinarum cognitione, quam longissime possumus, " progredi : At cum de aliis agitur, non nisi caute admodum, " maximaq ; cum caritate mansuetudine, pronuntiandum esse." Enimvero, ut suæ ipsius saluti consulere, quam maxima solli-
citudine

But as to others, tho' they are mistaken, hope the best, and never pronounce any of their Errors to be to them fundamental and certainly damning, unless you can produce plain Declarations of Scripture obliging you to do it. I am,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

Portsmouth,
Sept. 1. 1734.

Anthony Bliss.

citudine ac diligentia, prudentia jubet; Contra Christiana caritates est, ad ceteros damnandos, & exitium errorum postulandos, non nisi invitum, reluctantem, summa denique rerum ipsarum & Divinorum Oraculorum evidentia coactum procedere. See Alph. Turret. De Art. Fundam. p. 20.

Quod nosmet spectat, tutissimum est, quemvis errorem, tanquam mortem nobis iste adferret, vitare: At, ubi de aliis pronunciandum est, in mitiorem partem utique ut descendamus, ipsum Domini exemplum nos jubet. Pfaff. de Fundament. Obs. 1.

4 AP 65

F I N I S.

